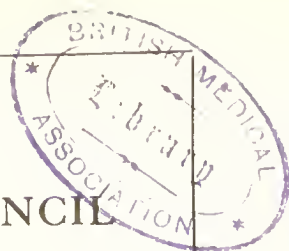


LETCHWORTH
URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL



Annual Report
of the
Medical Officer of Health
for the year
1923



PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

E. A. Fiddian, M.B., B.Ch. (Cantab.), M.R.C.S. (Eng.),
D.P.H.

SURVEYOR & SANITARY INSPECTOR

George T. Hill, M.Inst.M. & Cy.E., M.R.San.I.,
Certificated Meat & Foods Inspector.

ASSISTANT SANITARY INSPECTOR

Geoffrey McClelland, A.R.San.I., M.I.H., Cert.San.Sc.
Certificated Meat & Foods Inspector
Designated Officer under the Housing Acts

Offices :

BROADWAY CHAMBERS, LETCHWORTH

Letchworth

Urban District Council

**To the Chairman and Members of the Letchworth
Urban District Council.**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in submitting to you the fifth Annual Report concerning the vital statistics and general sanitary condition of the town.

The whole area of the Letchworth Estate was bought in 1903 by First Garden City Ltd. with the object of starting a new type of industrial development. The primary object of the Company was an effort to improve the public health by the establishment of a new town, planned for healthy living, organised for industry, and surrounded by a rural belt. To maintain control of the development, land is let on a long lease to tenants, and is not sold for any but public purposes. The Estate was designed with residential, shopping, factory, and rural areas, and this original plan has on the whole been maintained.

Physical and Social Conditions.

The sub-soil over the larger part of the district is chalk, with occasional deposits of boulder clay, and here and there some sand and gravel. The average height above sea level is 300 feet, and the surface of the land is gently undulating. There is plenty of open space about the town, including a Common of seventy acres, and none of the land has more than twelve houses to the acre built upon it. The Common has now been taken over by the Council and is being opened up, and this will be a decided benefit to the health of the people.

A stream called the "Ivel" to the north of the town passes through Radwell and skirts the limits of the chalk beds. These beds dip south and run under the London beds or basins. Beyond the "Ivel" the gault and greensands underlie the chalk. Constant springs outcrop at Norton Bury Farm, and these feed the large trout hatchery at Radwell. The Pix Brook passes through the town and the Common, from south-east to north-west, and most of the surface and storm water, the volume of which increases as the town is developed, passes into it.

The majority of the residents work in the town, in the factories, workshops, and other industries, including agriculture, but a large number also travel to London business houses every day. All the houses have gardens attached, which on the whole are well cultivated, and there are many allotments and smallholdings as well. Some smallholders are also factory workers. Several thousand who work in the town live outside it.

Water Supply.

The water supply of the district is undertaken by First Garden City Ltd. The water is pumped up from four bores situated on the Baldock Road on the eastern side of the district. The bores on an average have a depth of 215 feet from the surface. The last bore was sunk in 1919, and on testing the supply this proved to be of good quality. From this pumping station the water is conveyed to two reservoirs constructed on the Weston Hills some miles to the east. These have a total capacity of about 750,000 gallons, and from here the water gravitates to the town.

The ground level of the pumping station is 300 feet above sea level, and the water in the bore holes stands at 90 to 100 feet below this level according to season.

The bore hole pump is about 150 feet below the ground level, and from ground level to reservoir level is another 165 feet. The top water level in the reservoirs is 460 feet above sea level.

The water itself is a good one according to the periodic analyses made. It is a chalk water and contains a fair amount of temporary hardness. (This might be modified with advantage, and if this were done the water would be excellent.) A water of this kind is, on the whole, better for health than a soft water.

Clean Milk Day.

In connection with Health Week the Council organised a Clean Milk Day, which was held on October 13th, 1923. This consisted of a public meeting in the morning, addressed by several authorities on the subject of clean milk; a practical demonstration by the Herts County Agricultural Institute in the afternoon, and in the evening a popular film lecture. A good deal of publicity was given to the matter in the local Press and by posters and leaflets, and this greatly helped to inform the trade and the general public of what could be done to produce and keep milk clean.

Drainage and Sewage.

The whole of the town area is well drained, and the houses almost all on the water-carriage system. During the year the Council decided that the town was fast outgrowing the capacity of the present sewage farm on its temporary site, and has made good progress with plans for new disposal works. These will be built on a permanent site on the north-west corner of the district. The plans provide for four units, each capable of dealing with the sewage from a population of 10,000. Two units will be installed in the first instance, which, together with the trunk sewers, will cost some £48,000.

Consideration has also been given to the low-lying areas of Norton and Letchworth Lane, which cannot be gravitated to the new works, and the Council have directed that the sewage from these areas shall be lifted to the high level sewers so soon as the main works are far enough advanced to deal with it.

GENERAL STATISTICS.

Letchworth was constituted a separate Urban District in 1919. The area is 3,652 acres.

Population.

1911	...	...	...	...	...	5,324
1921	...	...	...	...	...	10,313
1922	Estimate to December	...	...	...	...	11,500
1923	Registrar General's Estimate to June	...	...	...	...	10,990
1923	Estimate to December	...	...	...	...	12,000

Number of inhabited houses, 2,951.

Rateable value, £72,289.

Sum represented by a penny rate, £280.

VITAL STATISTICS.

	1921			1922			1923		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
BIRTHS	219	104	115	195	100	95	229	116	113
*(Illegitimate)	—	5	3	—	4	3	—	4	5


*Included in Totals.

	Letchworth		England & Wales	
	1922	1923	1923	
Birth Rate	16.9	19.0	19.7	per 1,000 popn.
Deaths	97	87	—	
Death Rate	8.4	7.25	11.6	per 1,000 popn.
Infant Deaths	13	8	—	
Infant Mortality	66	34.93	69.0	per 1,000 births
Phthisis Attack Rate ..	1.3	2.15	—	per 1,000 popn.
Zymotic Attack Rates ...	Sc. Fever	1.42	—	
	Diphth.	67	—	
	Measles	27	—	
Zymotic Death Rate from these 3 diseases	.083		.24	per 1,000 popn.

The Zymotic death rate was due to one case of diphtheria in a child which had been ill too long for the anti-toxic serum to be effective.

None of the cases of chickenpox reported have appeared doubtful in character.

The total number of cases of infectious disease notified in 1923 was less than half that recorded during 1922.



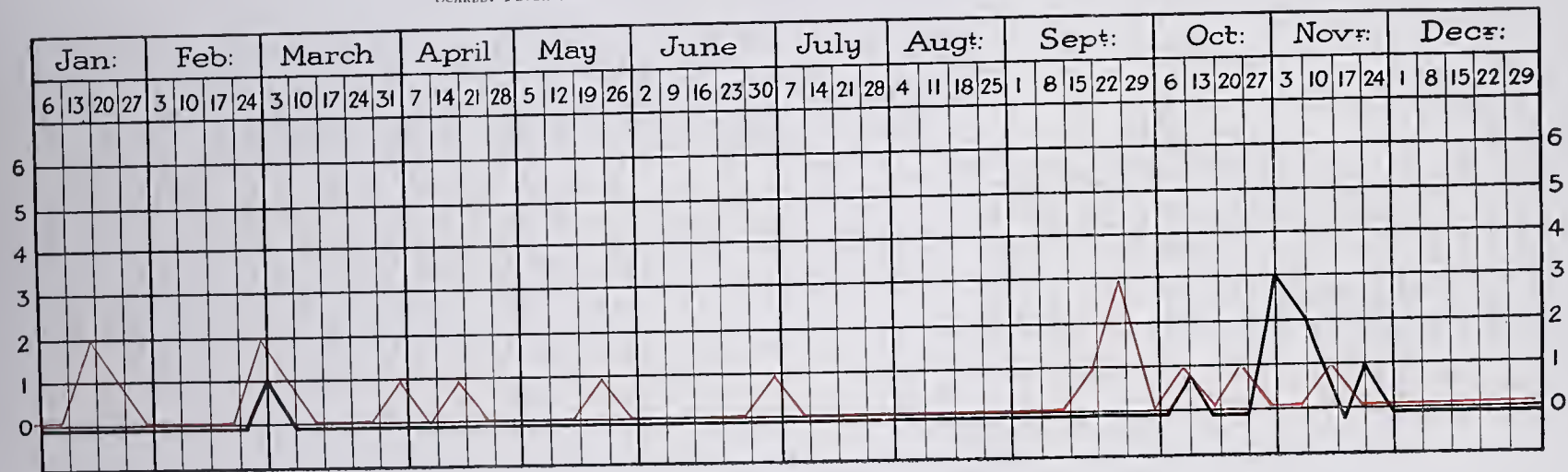
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Chart showing notifications of Scarlet Fever and Diphtheria received each week during 1923.

SCARLET FEVER IN RED.

DIPHTHERIA IN BLACK.



CASES OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES NOTIFIED DURING THE YEAR 1923.

		NUMBER OF CASES NOTIFIED.														
		At ages — Years.														
Notifiable Disease.	At all ages.	Under 1 year.														
		1 and under 2.	3.	4.	5.	10.	15.	20.	35.	45.	65.	65 and upwards.				
Smallpox ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cholera ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Diphtheria...	8	—	—	—	—	—	8	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Erysipelas ...	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Scarlet Fever ...	17	—	—	—	1	2	8	3	1	1	1	—	—	—	—	—
Enteric Fever ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Puerperal Fever ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Whooping Cough	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Pulmonary Tuberculosis ...	13	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	5	4	3	—	—	—	—
Non-Pulmonary Tuberculosis ..	12	—	—	—	—	—	2	3	2	2	2	1	—	—	—	—
Measles ...	21	—	1	4	—	3	11	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cerebro Spinal Fever ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Poliomyelitis ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Encephalitis Lethargica ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Primary Pneumonia	5	—	1	—	1	—	—	2	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—
Influenzal do.	5	1	—	2	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Chickenpox ..	3	—	—	—	—	1	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Totals ..	85	1	2	6	3	6	30	9	5	11	8	4	—	—	—	—

Cases of infectious disease which were removed to hospital:

Scarlet Fever 17 Diphtheria ... 8

Measles ... 1 Tuberculosis ... 11

Total 37.

Deaths of notified cases of infectious disease:—

Diphtheria ... 1 Tuberculosis .. 3

For weekly returns of Scarlet Fever and Diphtheria see Chart

Excluding deaths of infants and of people over 70 years of age, the death rate would again be 4 per 1,000 population.

The mortality in infants is the lowest we have had since 1919. Of the eight deaths, which all occurred in the first half of the year, six occurred within three days of birth. Four of them were due to prematurity, one to collapsed lungs, and one to convulsions. Of the remaining two, one died of convulsions and the other wasted away.

Of the total 87 deaths, 33 were in people of 65 years and over, and only three between the ages of one and twenty.

Judging from these vital statistics the health of the town in 1923 was very good. The figures are the best we have had, and compare favourably with those I have seen of various health resorts for 1923.

COMPLAINTS AND NUISANCES.

Number of visits made to premises	...	...	...	908
Number of nuisances found to exist	...	...	...	439
Number of informal notices issued	...	...	...	87
Nuisances abated without serving Statutory notices	...	...	...	408
Number of Statutory notices served	...	...	...	26
Number of Statutory notices complied with without legal proceedings being taken	...	...	...	24
Number of nuisances remaining unabated	...	...	...	5
Number of Statutory notices complied with after taking legal proceedings	...	...	...	2

PREMISES OR OCCUPATIONS CONTROLLED BY BYE-LAWS OR REGULATIONS.

Houses let in Lodgings	}	There are no such premises within the district.
Common lodging houses		

Factories, Workshops and Workplaces.

The following tables are inserted in compliance with Section 132 of the Factory and Workshops Act, 1901:—

1.—INSPECTION.

Premises.	Number of		
	Inspections	Written Notices.	Prosecutions.
Factories (including Factory Laundries)	52	7	Nil
Workshops (including Workshop Laundries)	33	3	Nil
Workplaces, other than out-workers' premises	7	2	Nil
Totals	92	12	Nil

2.—DEFECTS FOUND.

PARTICULARS.	NUMBER OF DEFECTS.			
	Found.	Remedied.	Referred to H.M. Inspector.	Number of Prosecutions.
<i>Nuisances under the Public Health Acts :</i>				
Want of cleanliness	6	6	—	—
Want of ventilation	—	—	—	—
Overcrowding	—	—	—	—
Other nuisances	3	3	—	—
<i>Sanitary accommodation :</i>				
Insufficient	2	2	—	—
Unsuitable or defective ...	2	2	—	—
Not separate for sexes ...	1	1	—	—
<i>Offences under the Factory and Workshops Act :</i>				
(s. 101) Illegal occupation of an underground bakehouse ...	—	—	—	—
(ss. 96-100) Breach of special sanitary requirements for bakehouses	2	2	—	—
Totals	16	16	—	—

Including those specified in Sections 2, 3, 7 and 8 of the
Factory and Workshops Act, 1901, as remediable under the
Public Health Acts.

3.—HOMEWORK.

Two lists of outworkers have been received, and the homeworkers' premises were inspected and found satisfactory. Outworkers (2), Occupations : Millinery (1), Dressmaking (1).

4.—REGISTERED WORKSHOPS.

Workshops on the Register (S. 131) at the end of the year.	Number
Watchmakers	2
Dressmakers	2
Tailors	2
Bootmakers and Repairers	8
Joiners and Carpenters	3
Cabinetmakers	1
Cycle Repair Shops	4
Ironmongers and Smiths	2
Plumbers and Painters	4
Gas Fitters and Bellhangers	0
Patternmakers and Brassfounders	1
Saddlers	1
Printers and Bookbinders	3
Various	2
Total	35

5.—OTHER MATTERS.

Class.	Number.
Matters Notified to H.M. Inspector of Factories :	
Failure to affix Abstract of the Factory and Workshop Act (s. 133), 1901	3
Action taken in matters referred by H.M. Inspector as remediable under the Public Health Acts, but not under the F. and W. Act (s. 5), 1901 : Notified by H.M. Inspector	Nil
Reports of action taken sent to H.M. Inspector	Nil
Other	2
Underground Bakehouses	—

OFFENSIVE TRADES.

There are no scheduled offensive trades carried on in the district. One application to establish an offensive trade was considered and refused as the premises to be used were most unsuitable. One fried fish shop has been closed during the year, and a fried fish business newly established in a private dwelling-house was closed. There is now only one fried fish shop in the town, and this is satisfactory.

SMOKE ABATEMENT.

It has not been found necessary to serve any notices to abate smoke nuisances, due precautions having been taken by most factories.

FOODS.

Milk Supply.

The milk supply during the year averaged about 550 gallons per day. Of this quantity about 400 gallons were produced daily in the district, and the remainder was produced in the county. Of the total supply about 200 gallons of milk was clarified and pasteurised each day.

Three new retailers and one new producer of milk were placed on the Council's Register during the year:—

RETAILERS:

Mrs. A. L. Clarke, Green Lane.
C. C. Jordan, Icknield Way.
Taylor and Flaws, Wilbury Hill.

PRODUCER:

Theosophical Educational Trust Ltd., Letchworth Lane.

No applications were refused. The dairies, cowsheds, and milkshops have been regularly visited, 60 visits being the total made. The contraventions observed related to failure to limewash the interior of cowsheds at the prescribed periods, but this was done in each case after interviewing the occupier. The Registered Premises, taken generally, have been found clean and satisfactory, but efforts are continually being made to persuade cowmen to pay more attention to the cleanliness of the cows before milking.

Meat and Foods.

During the year continued inspections have been made of meat, fish, game, and other foods exposed for sale within the district, and no seizures have been found necessary. The total visits made in examination of meat and foods during the year was 260. There are no slaughterhouses in the district, all meat being brought into the town ready dressed.

HOUSING.

Number of new houses erected during the year:—

Total	76
As part of the Council's Housing Schemes ...	9

Unfit Dwelling Houses Inspection.

1—Total number of houses inspected for housing defects (under the Public Health or Housing Acts) ...	428
2—Number of dwelling houses inspected and recorded under the Housing (Inspection of District) Regulations, 1910... ..	40
3—Number of houses found to be unfit for human habitation	3
4—Number of houses (exclusive of those under preceding total) found not to be in all respects fit for habitation	392
5—Number of defective dwelling houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by Housing Officer	364
6—Number of tents and caravans inspected	22
7—Number of dwelling houses in respect of which preliminary notices were served	68
8—Number of houses rendered fit after service of preliminary notice	38
9—Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Closing Orders become operative	3
10—Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the dwelling having been rendered fit for human habitation ...	2

ADOPTIVE ACTS IN FORCE WITHIN THE URBAN DISTRICT OF LETCHWORTH.

- 1—Infectious Disease (Prevention Act, 1890.
Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14,
16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24.
- 2—Public Health Acts Amendment Act, 1890; adopted
March 1st, 1923.
- 3—Infectious Disease (Notification) Act, 1889.
- 4—Public Health Acts (Amendment) Act, 1907.
Part 2: Sects. 15, 16, 18, 20, 23, 24, 25, 30, 31, 32, 33.
Part 3: Sects. 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 43, 44, 45, 46, 49, 39,
40, 41, 42, 47, 48, 51.
Part 4: Sects. 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62,
63, 64, 65, 66, 67.
Part 2: Sects. 19, 21, 22, 27, 28, 29; adopted August
13th, 1923.
Part 3: Sect. 50; adopted August 13th, 1923.
Part 5: Sects. 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75; adopted
August 13th, 1923.
Part 6: Sects. 76, 77; adopted August 13th, 1923.
- 5—The Lighting and Watching Act, 1833.
- 6—The Burial Acts, 1852 to 1900.
- 7—The Baths and Washhouses Acts, 1846 to 1899.

SALE OF FOOD AND DRUGS ACTS.

The following formal samples were taken and submitted to the Public Analyst for analysis, and were all found to be genuine:—

Milk	...	...	8	Margarine	...	...	3
Cornflour	...	...	2	Butter	...	...	1

In addition to the above, twelve samples of milk were taken in course of delivery and examined bacteriologically. The average bacterial count per cubic centimetre was 480,630, the lowest being 20,500.

The bacterial count for "Certified" milk must not exceed 30,000 per cubic centimetre, and "Grade A" milk must not contain more than 200,000 per c.c.

BATHS

There are no public hot-water baths or wash-houses, as practically all houses in the town are provided with proper baths and hot-water facilities.

There is a public Swimming Bath of 70,000 gallons capacity.

HOUSE REFUSE

The whole of the town's refuse is collected weekly by contract and is removed to the Council's depot, where, after sorting, the tins are baled for commercial purposes by a baling press, the rags, paper and bottles reserved for sale, and the remainder treated by a refuse pulveriser and reduced to a high-grade manure and disposed of to agriculturists and others.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS OF THE SCHOOL MEDICAL INSPECTIONS FOR 1923.*

Number of children examined	...	...	...	623
Unclean	...	...	...	46
Malnutrition	...	...	...	17
Bad Teeth	...	...	...	162
Tonsils and Adenoids	...	...	...	212
Nervous	...	...	...	10
Unvaccinated	...	...	...	344
Heart and Anæmia	...	...	...	24
Tuberculosis	...	...	...	4
Eyes	...	...	...	40
Skin Disease	...	...	...	5

In conclusion I would gratefully acknowledge and thank the Chairman and Members of the Council for their courteous attention and assistance given to all matters it has been my privilege to bring before them.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

E. A. FIDDIAN,
Medical Officer of Health.

* Kindly supplied by the School Medical Officer, Dr. Macfadyen.